

Early failures ruin chances

East Ardsley.....153-9
Wakefield SM.....154-2

EAST Ardsley made a terrible start to their innings against visitors Wakefield St Michaels — and it eventually proved costly.

The home side lost three wickets for only 23 runs and that gave the Wakefield outfit all the encouragement they needed to go on and notch a win which keeps them at the top of the second division table.

Julian Smith, who had watched the early demise of his colleagues, was joined by New Zealander Simon Stirling and together they started a slow but sure fight back.

Scoring runs was not easy with fine fielding and accurate bowling, and with 25 overs used East Ardsley were just 58 for 3.

Another five overs saw just nine runs added. The fifty partnership was reached with 18 overs left and the tally on 73 for 3.

Smith and Stirling tried to take the fight to the opponents but both had lucky escapes when dropped on the boundary each time, although the fielders were lucky not to give away sixes.

Julian Smith was bowled

for 42 with the score on 113 for 3, thus bringing to an end a marvellous 90 run partnership with Stirling.

Stirling went on to score 63 before he was also bowled.

As the home side chased runs so wickets fell and the innings closed on 153 for 9. The Smith and Stirling partnership represented the only effort to make this match competitive. No other batsman reached double figures.

Wakefield's bowlers never lost control, with Naveed Aslam taking 3 for 48, Miller 3 for 42, Shoiab Latif 2 for 26 and Whiteman 1 for 23.

The league leaders prov-

ed as difficult to handle when batting as they had when bowling.

An opening partnership of 61 laid the foundations for victory. Boycott was the first wicket to fall, bowled by Jeffers for 23.

A further partnership, this time worth 69, had the visitors on 130 for 2 with only 24 runs needed.

Shoiab Latif was the next wicket to fall on 44 runs. Opener Atkinson finished on 80 not out as Wakefield St Michaels reached 154 for 2 and a comfortable eight-wicket success plus four more points towards their promotion challenge.

Jeffers had 1 for 36 and Stirling 1 for 52.

More points in the bag

Birstall..... 219-2
Altofts..... 155-7

BIRSTALL have got into the habit of collecting points, and Saturday proved no exception to the current rule.

Paul Blakeley and Eric Austin put together another century opening partnership. Blakeley, with 59 runs under his belt, was the first to go with his side on 112.

A further very good double act followed, with in-

Maintaining the winning habit

Gildersome..... 226-
Hopton Mills..... 10-

THIS was Gildersome's third win on the trot following victories over Stanley Falcon and Scholes the previous weekend.

The Street Laners began with an opening start of 74 between Kadri and Richard Benson. Kadri departed the crease, bowled by Whittaker, having made 20, but Benson went on to hit 82 before becoming Atkinson's second scalp.

By then Gildersome were 139-3 and a useful stand was being built between Benson and Darre Archer. Archer fell on 41 with the score at 181-4.

The run scoring was not over as Hanif Mansoor added 23 and Richard Empsall a very good 3 not out. Russell Beale was four not out when the hosts closed on 226-5.

Asghar took 3 for 74 and Whittaker returned for 82.

Hopton Mills never looked like challenging the Gildersome total. Salim top scored with 42 and Jackson made 20.

Three of the top bats removed by Mohammed Javed and the other by Richard Blackledge as they stumbled to 48-4, and the match was all but over.

Mills had 30 overs to just block out the home side's efforts, making dull watching on a dull day.

Apart from greater ability, Gildersome also had more variety. Skipper Andy Balmforth was able to ring the changes, with ultimate success. Darre Archer took 2 for 5, Benson closely followed with 2 for 10, and front-liners Javed, 4 for 38 and Blackledge, 2 for 45.



● They all count: Julian Smith of East Ardsley finds a way through the slip with a thick edge. *Picture by Keith Lawson.*



● Big hitter: Simon Stirling on his way to 63 for Ardsley at Jeffrey Field on Saturday.



● Made it! East Ardsley's Gary Kinder dashes in to avoid a run out against Wakefield St Michaels on Saturday. (XW8840/5a)